

Library of Michigan

Department of History, Arts and Libraries

LEGISLATIVE AND STATE EMPLOYEE SERVICES NEWSLETTER WINTER 2009

ASK US ANYTHING!

Part I: The Legislative & State Employee Services Team

Visit michigan.gov/lmtimelytopics for this and previous issues!

All You Need To Do Is Call 3-1300!

“What is the population of my county?” “Where can I get the newspaper article on my appearance in Marquette?” “How do other states handle business tax incentives?” “How can I get a copy of Public Act 162 of 1985?” These are just a few examples of the types of research assistance available from the Library of Michigan.

The Library of Michigan has a team of librarians available to you for research, obtaining materials, and training. We pride ourselves on confidentiality, nonpartisanship, objectivity and timeliness. Contact information is located at the bottom of this page.

In addition to our staff, you should know about our stuff! The Library of Michigan has an archive of newspapers from across the state and current subscriptions to over 40 different titles. We have publications from every department of the State of Michigan and the US government in our documents collections. Many of your constituents would be excited to know we house one of the 10 largest genealogy collections in the U.S.



A Library on your Desktop at <http://mel.org>!

Do you read the *New York Times* every day? Do you need a recent article from *the Journal of Healthcare Law and Policy*? How about the latest research on tax structure? The Michigan eLibrary (MeL) brings all of these onto your desktop in

full-text. Over 40 databases with articles from magazines, journals, and newspapers are available to all residents of the state of Michigan through <http://mel.org>.

The Michigan eLibrary also offers a statewide catalog of over 30.8 million books, including books on cassette or CD, in over 300 Michigan libraries. These materials can be delivered to your office or your local participating library.

If you or your staff would like to learn more about how to get the most from MeL, our staff would be delighted to provide training. Please contact us to arrange a session at the Library or at your site.

If you would like a an article about MeL for your constituent newsletter or a speaker to talk to your staff or organization, please contact Deb Biggs Thomas, the MeL Coordinator, at 517-373-4466 or biggsthomasd@michigan.gov.

Library Cards

Getting a library card at the Library of Michigan is easy. We can send an application to your office via ID mail. All you need to do is fill in the form and mail it back. This card gives you access to not only the material in our library but to the books available via MeLCat.

Interlibrary Loan Services/MeLCat

If the Library of Michigan doesn't have the material you need, we offer two easy ways for you to borrow from other libraries. MeL provides MeLCat, a catalog of materials in Michigan libraries. You can select and order



Call us for all your information needs!
373-1300: Still answered by a real person!
Phone: 31300 Fax: 35853 Law: 30630 Email: librarian@michigan.gov
Hours: Mon & Th 1-6; Tu, Wed, Fri 8-6; Sat 9-5

materials yourself on MeLCat. All you need is a Library of Michigan card! Another way to obtain materials from other libraries is through our Interlibrary Loan office (ILL). Through ILL we are able to get materials and articles on any subject from libraries all over the world and deliver them to your office. Just ask!

Law Library Services

The State Law Library provides nonpartisan, confidential research services for the Michigan Legislature and state government. Responses can be by phone, fax or email, usually within 24 hours. For more information or to ask a law related question please call 517-373-0630, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays. You can also learn more at their Web site, www.mi.gov/lawlibrary.

Free Research Training and Tours Offered!

In addition to MeL, the Legislative Team also offers training in the use of other Library of Michigan resources – your place or ours! We can schedule tours of the library and provide hands-on training for MeL and other online resources. To schedule call 3-1300.

Fun Facts... ... about the Library of Michigan!!



The Library of Michigan pre-dates statehood! It has been serving Michigan state government and citizens since 1828.

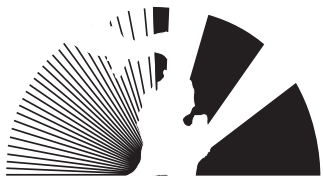
The Polaris Ring, the sculpture in front of the Michigan Library and Historical Center (MLHC), is positioned such that viewers are able to stand behind the sculpture's center stone and look between the two tallest columns to see the star for which it is named.

The white pine tree centered in the MLHC rotunda was moved here from Novi. It was nearly 50 years old at the time, and was 45 feet tall. Ironically, it was planted as a seedling in Novi after being purchased from a Lansing area nursery.

Web Resource Spotlight

Be sure to familiarize yourself with our Legislative and State Employee Research Services Web page: - http://www.michigan.gov/hal/0,1607,7-160-17451_18673_19391---,00.html. On this page you'll find an overview of our services and collections, links to electronic resources you can access from your desktop, forms for submitting research requests and for requesting materials, information about the Law Library, and more. Please take a look and bookmark it!





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Part II: The State Law Library

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The State Law Library: Hours and Services

Under state law, “the law library branch [of the Library of Michigan] is charged primarily with providing reference services to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government.” Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) Section 397.20(1). To carry out this charge, the law library maintains a wide-ranging collection of print and electronic resources - with an emphasis on Michigan materials - designed to assist state government in researching issues in federal and state law.

The law library provides nonpartisan, confidential research services for state employees, including legislators and their staffs. To submit a research or document request, choose any of the following:

Email: lmlawlib@michigan.gov

Phone: 517-373-0630 (1-5 M – F)

Fax: 517-373-3915

Material can be sent to you via fax, email or ID mail. Certain materials may be checked out by state employees – please call or email for information.

Law library staff is available to assist state employees from 8 - 5 Monday through Friday. Please email us at lmlawlib@michigan.gov. Provide your telephone number if you prefer to consult directly with one of our librarians or need access to the law library when it is closed. Our staff is also available to come to your office in the Lansing area to provide training in the use of certain resources, including the Michigan Legislature Website.

Starting Research in Michigan Law: The Michigan Legislature Web Site

The Michigan Legislature Website, <http://legislature.mi.gov>, is one of the primary gateways through which the law library serves both state government and the general public. The questions below are examples of those often addressed by the library staff.

I have been putting in 750.356d1a and I can't find anything!

It is common for someone not familiar with searching for statutes online to type in a subsection - with or without a parenthesis. Paring down the citation to the last number to the right of the decimal often solves this problem.



State Law Library

Phone: 30630 Fax: 33915 Email: lmlawlib@michigan.gov

Law Library Hours

Staff Assistance: M – F 8am - 5pm Library Building: M – F 1pm – 5pm

There's a citation in a document that I have – "Public Act 386 of 1998" – but I can't find it on the website.

We verify that the patron wants the law in its current form, not as enacted, and then use the Public Act MCL Search link to find in which MCL sections the law has been codified.

I would like to see the way it looked in 1998.

Use the Public Acts (Signed Bills) link to connect to the history and status page for the bill. This will retrieve the enrolled version of the bill or the public act. This feature is generally available only for bills from 1997 to the present.

I want to find Public Act 213 of 1965, but the laws on your website only go back to 1997!

Whether the law was enacted in 1983 or 1893, if it is still "on the books," it can be found in MCL using the Public Act MCL Search link.

How do I know if a law is still good?

Quite often, when we search for an MCL section, the website will state that a law has been repealed. If it cannot be retrieved online, the law library staff can check paper resources to verify the repeal and to determine whether a new section of law has replaced it.

Does my landlord need to give me a 30-day notice even if I don't have a written lease?

The Publications link provides access to a number of booklets that summarize various areas of the law for laypersons, including Tenants and Landlords.

How can I find information on the "good time" law?

We begin by doing an MCL Keyword search or browsing the Chapter Index if a broader search is needed. If a person is not sure about how new the law might be, or whether it was enacted, we use the Bill Keyword search.

Beyond the Michigan Legislature Web Site

"Often when I do a search, what is in a book is miles ahead of what I find on a Web site."

—Sergey Brin, a Google founder and its president of technology, quoted in the New York Times, 1/ 9/ 2009.

Many people who seek our help are looking for a summary or an explanation of Michigan law. While we **do not** provide legal advice or interpret the law, the law library can help direct people to relevant information. We rely on our collection of print materials, www.michigan.gov, federal government websites and fee-based commercial databases. Topics we have researched include:

How has the legal limit for blood alcohol content changed over the years?

How do I get a conviction expunged?

Have any legislators in the past introduced bills allowing local governments to regulate the volume of car stereos?

Can you help me find a copy of my company's articles of incorporation?

What happens to me if my home goes into foreclosure?

I need to do a legislative history on a provision of the Public Health Code.

What happens in Michigan if you are injured by a drug that has lost FDA approval?

Can a creditor garnish my wages if they've already repossessed my car?

How many amendments to Michigan Constitution of 1963 were voter initiatives?

My son was convicted of a felony. How do I get a copy of the case files?

Is it true that gift cards must be valid for five years?

Is there a law that would allow me to use the bathroom at any retail establishment?

Can property taxes be uncapped if a joint tenant dies?